

2593
A
S E R M O N,

DELIVERED AT THE
ORDINATION
OF THE REVEREND
Titus Theodore Barton, A. B.

TO THE
PASTORAL CHARGE
OF THE
C H U R C H

IN
T E W K S B U R Y,
OCTOBER 11, 1792.

BY SOLOMON AIKEN, A. M.
PASTOR of the CHURCH in DRACUTT.

*The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but
those things which are revealed, belong unto us and
our children.* Moses.

CONCORD:
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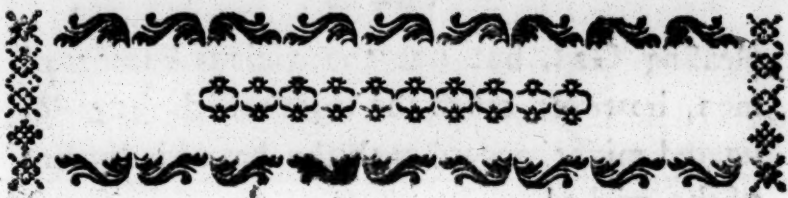
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ORDINATION SERMON.

I. *Thessalonians*, ii. 4.

But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts.

THESE words at the first glance present to view, that good Ministers of Jesus Christ speak in a manner pleasing to God ; but not to men.

By their not-pleasing men, we are to understand, that they do not suit the matter of their speech, or conform their doctrine to the vicious humors of men ; or evade the truth, and in silence pass over certain important doctrines, because they are disagreeable to men and galling to the corrupt heart : but that they deliver the whole council of God, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear.

THE experience of many ages shows, that the Ambassadors whom God hath sent, to treat with mankind respecting their salvation, and reconciliation with himself, have ever spoken as

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pleasing

pleasing God, but not the vicious humors of men, however much the truth which they delivered might accord with the better judgment of the wicked.

THAT the Prophets of old, whom the Lord sent as Ambassadors to treat with his people, spake as pleasing God, it is evident, from their speaking by his Spirit, and receiving his approbation. *a* "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man : but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." And that the messages delivered by the Prophets were displeasing to men, it is evident, from the treatment they received.

THE corrupt hearts of men became inimical to them, solely on the account of their espousing the cause of God against them, and their faithfulness in delivering those things which were commanded. The Prophets could not speak peace to the wicked, nor be on their part ; therefore, as is natural to suppose, men became their enemies, esteemed and treated them as such. Accordingly, Ahab said to Elijah, *b* "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy ?" And with respect to Micaiah, *c* "I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil."

And

a 2 Pet. i. 21. *b* 1 Kin. xxi. 20. *c* 1 Kin. xxii. 8.

And because he joined not issue with the false Prophets, in flattering the pride of the king, he was rejected, while those who prophesied smooth things were caressed. God knowing that this would be the case also with Jeremiah, he gave him his charge and encouragement in language like this. *d* “Thou, therefore, gird up thy loins and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee : be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. For behold I have made thee this day a defended city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the Princes thereof, against the Priests thereof, and against the people of the land, and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee ; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.” Accordingly the Prophet esteemed, himself a man of strife and contention over the whole earth—*to* ‘every one of them doth curse me.’ For *e* “behold the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach : they have no delight in it.” Therefore they *f* “Say to the seers, see not ; and to the Prophets, speak unto us smooth things.” The displeasure which men manifested against the truth, we also find particularly taken notice of

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in

in the new Testament. "Which of the Prophets have not your Fathers persecuted and slain? Ye are witnesses to yourselves, that ye are the children of them that killed the Prophets. O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee."—And as men naturally hate the light, and will not come unto it, lest their deeds should be reprov'd; so their resentment is excited against the Ambassadors of the Lord in proportion as they exhibit the light or truth to their view.

ACCORDINGLY, we find when Christ made his appearance in the flesh, as the great preacher of righteousness, and with Godlike power and pungency forced whole torrents of truth upon the minds of men, with direct application of it to their consciences, he raised the resentment of the enemies of the truth higher than any of the Prophets who had been before him; and they rested not till they had gratified their resentment in tortures of his crucifixion. He is the centre of the object which men oppose, for he is light, and in him is no darkness at all. And because men put darkness for light, and light for darkness, they said all manner of evil of him,—They made use of every reproachful epithet to stain his immaculate character.

They

They said, that he deceived the people ; that he was a friend of publicans and sinners—that he was a disturber of the peace—that he was mad, and had a devil ; and that through Beelzebub he cast out devils—that he was a blasphemer of God, and deserving of death.

AND Christ well knowing that the natural heart would be the same in all ages, and operate in the same manner under similar circumstances ; he forewarned all his faithful Ministers, that they should be hated of all men for his name's sake. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his house-hold ? Has not the truth of this prophecy been experienced to this day ? The Apostles, the prime Ministers of Christ's kingdom, first drank this cup after their Lord. Hence, we read, that they preached the Gospel with much contention, and suffered many indignities from the resentment of men. " For yourselves, Brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain. But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold to speak unto you the Gospel of
our

our God with much contention. For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile. *But as we were allowed of God, to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts."*

THESE words were spoken jointly, by Paul, Silvanus and Timotheus, who were good, prudent and faithful Ministers of Jesus Christ, sent forth by his choice and immediate command to preach the Gospel.—And as they (poke as pleasing God, but not men, it may be applicable to the present occasion,

I. To point out in several particulars, certain Gospel doctrines which a faithful Minister of Jesus Christ will preach, as pleasing God, but not men.

II. OFFER some reasons why it is the indispensable duty of Christ's Ministers to hold forth those doctrines of the Gospel, notwithstanding they are displeasing to men.

I. THEN, we are to point out in several particulars certain Gospel doctrines which a faithful Minister of Jesus Christ will preach, as pleasing God, but not men.

7. HE will hold up the character of God as represented in his word. The real character of the true God, is a matter of the greatest importance to be known. It lies interwoven in every capital doctrine of the Gospel. It is, in short, the foundation of the revealed system of religion. As a little leaven leavens the whole lump, so one mistake in this, may destroy the whole scheme of religion. Because men retain so different ideas of God, it is, that there are so many discordant religions in the world. A faithful Minister will represent God as an infinitely perfect Being, possessed of every amiable perfection, both of a natural and moral nature. He will speak of him, as being a pure Spirit, possessed of Infinity, Eternity, Immutability, Omnipotence and Omniscience; together with his moral perfections, infinite holiness, justice, goodness, mercy and truth — The revealed mode of the Divine existence, is, Trinity in Unity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. b “ For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.” — This is a view of the Divine character which is more generally conceded.

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AND

AND if we would retain more perfect ideas of God, we must attend to what he doth. The conduct of a moral agent is essential to determine his moral character. But of this, inspiration gives sufficient information with respect to God. It saith of him, " *b* he worketh all things after the council of his own will." This passage is expressive of the works of creation and providence, common and special.

THE Scriptures make us acquainted also, with the great and last end, which God has in view in all his works. ; "The Lord hath made all things for himself." & "I am Alpha & Omega, the beginning and the end." / "For of him, and thro' him, and to him, are all things." It is apparent, that, whatever God doth, he doth according as he had previously counselled in his own mind. God is represented as a rational, wise, and intelligent agent, who will have a perfect idea of all his work before him. Previously to the commencement of the Divine operation, therefore, as the result of council, there was in the mind of God, a perfect, clear, and distinct image, of all his work, and all his creatures ; and the innumerable various circumstances, which should attend each individual
existent,

b Eph. i. 11. ; Prov. xvi. 4. & Rev. xxi. 6. / Rom. xii. 36.

existent, from the highest angel, to the smallest atom, both in time, and eternity.

THE subject matter of the Divine Council was evidently this, to devise the best means of effecting his own design. Thus, God is represented in his word, as deliberating, like a wise agent, upon the best way of accomplishing his design in view; altho' he knew and was settled from eternity what was best.—With God there is no succession of thought. He needeth not to search premises for consequences. For, *m* “he is in one mind, and who can turn him?” It is observable, the Scriptures attribute all God's work to his own will. The will of God settles, and ordains all things. *n* “Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in Heaven. *o* Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” God is omnipotent, and able to do every work of power. This includes all possible being; but God's will alone separates, or makes a partition between these possible beings which shall exist, and those which shall not exist. God's will is most efficacious, and by it all things are brought to pass, which are contained in his council. *p* “Whatsoever the Lord
B 2 pleased,

m Job. xxiii. 13.

o Math. xii. 26.

n Psal. cxix. 89.

p Psal. cxxxv. 6.

pleased, that did he in Heaven, and in the earth, in the seas, and all deep places." So that, tho' there may be many instrumental and intermediate causes of events, this will be the first cause of all things. ¶ "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." So that, ¶ "all things are of God." Now, it is a part of God's character, to accomplish in his work, all that was contained in his council. And this he doth, and no more nor otherwise. In time God exerts his power, or puts forth his efficiency to accomplish all that was contained in his council, with respect to time. God now worketh all things after the council of his own will. Whatever God doth, he doth by his power, influence, or efficiency. All that can be properly ascribed to God, is the effect of his influence. To say, therefore, that God doth a thing, and deny the exertion of his influence in the accomplishment of it, is preposterous; for an agent does nothing, where his influence doth not extend. So that, whatever God doth, for its accomplishment he exerts his power equal to the effect. The providence, then, of God,

God, is nothing less than his influence operating thro' the wide creation, producing all events which take place under his government. *

THIS council or decree of God infers an absolute certainty of the futurity of all events contained therein. His council is his desire, will or pleasure; but / " what his soul desireth, even that he doth." Now it is clearly manifest from inspiration, that it was God's deliberate, fixed, settled, determinate council, from all eternity, by his efficiency, to create, uphold

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and

* As far as God governs, he governs, no doubt, by his power, influence, or efficiency. To say God governs where his influence or efficiency doth not extend, is to say he doth something where he doth nothing. Any supposable limits, therefore, of the Divine influence or efficiency, necessarily circumscribe the limits of the Divine government; and consequently any event which should be supposed to take place disconnected with, and separate from, the Divine will, influence and efficiency, must be supposed to take place disconnected with, and separate from, the Divine government, and so not under the Divine government. We may observe in like manner with respect to the providence of God. Any supposable event which should take place disconnected with, and separate from, all connection with the Divine will, influence and efficiency, does in like manner take place disconnected with, and separate from, the Divine providence. Where God provides, or where his providence extends, there his power or influence reaches as a previous ground, reason or cause, equal to the effect. With as much propriety may we predicate providence of a rock or a stone, as of an efficient being, further than his efficiency extends; for there is no effect where there is no cause; and an efficient being is no cause, beyond the limits of his influence, any more than energetical matter which can let out no efficiency.

f Job. xxiii. 13.

and govern, such a system and scene of operation, in all respects, as this. And if this be denied, something essential to the real character of God is denied. For God, who is mighty in council, and whose understanding is infinite, knew without deception or mistake, what system and scene of operation in his work, would best accomplish his own design. And as God hath made all things for his own glory, which necessarily includes the greatest possible happiness of universal intelligence; we may fairly conclude, from Scripture and the Divine perfections, that the present system and scene of operation in God's work, is, in all respects, the best possible, to answer this infinitely benevolent design; for, † “ His work is perfect.” If it be denied, that the present system, in which is contained natural and moral evil, is the best calculated to promote the greatest general good, or happiness of universal intelligence, it is a clear impeachment of some one of the Divine perfections. For, goodness in an intelligent being is a propensity to do good, or communicate happiness; infinite goodness, therefore, is an infinitely strong propensity to do good, or communicate happiness to intelligent being.

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If then God hath not chosen the best system and scene of operation in his work, to communicate the greatest possible happiness to the universe of intelligence—either goodness was wanting to choose it; but God is infinitely good—or understanding to see it; but his understanding is infinite—or power to defend and put it into execution and existence; but God is omnipotent, and what his soul desireth, even that he doth. And therefore, instead of its being derogatory to the character of the Most High, that he should, in his council, fix an infallible futuration to all events, which have or shall take place, from the beginning to the consummation of all things, it is necessarily connected with his greatest glory. †

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† This infallible futuration of all events will follow as a fair consequence from that generally connected doctrine, *concedes* the infallible prescience or foreknowledge of God. If all things are infallibly foreknown by God, they can be so on no other ground than God's seeing a certain, infallible connection between their futuration and something which doth now really exist; but if the Divine mind sees something now existing, which has an infallible connection with the futuration of all events which shall take place, this renders the futuration of all events which ever will take place, as permanent and fixed as the most irrevocable, irrefragable decree possibly can do. But if it should be denied that there is any connection seen between something which does now exist and the futuration of all events which will take place, but that some events will take place in absolute contingency; still if the futuration of those contingent events be foreknown, their infallibility is in no degree diminished, but remains as certain and fixed as the truth of the proposition which asserts that they are foreknown.

If this doctrine, so apparently agreeable to God, as concurring with his word, should meet with objections from men, as destroying their agency ; we would concisely observe, that with respect to the decree that the bones of our Saviour should not be broken on the cross, according to the custom of crucifixion, the event was sure, and the soldiers acted freely and deliberately upon the subject, and *u* " they brake not his legs. *w* But one of the soldiers pierced his side, *x* that it might be fulfilled." We might mention many other instances, such as Judas' betraying Christ, and acknowledging his agency therein, when the Son of Man went, as was *y* "determined," and the *wo* followed the perpetrator of the deed, as was predicted. The same may be said of those who rose up against Christ, for to do whatsoever the hand and the council of God *z* "determined before to be done." †

2. We will take notice of another Gospel doctrine which has an indissoluble connection with this,

u John xix. 33. *w* John xix. 34. *x* John xix. 36.
y Luke xxii. 22. *z* Acts iv. 28.

† If all decrees respecting the conduct of men, be inconsistent with their freedom then a decree that men should act freely, would destroy their freedom, and defeat its own design.

this, which a good Minister of Jesus Christ will preach, as pleasing God, but not men. I mean that of personal election to eternal life.

THAT the will and providence of God make a great difference in the situation of persons in this life, is too evident to deny, if we would not dispute stubborn fact, and common sense. We see it with our eyes. We read it in the word of God. *a* "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up." Some are exercised with infirmity of body and mind, with pain and weakness, all their days; while others are favoured with firm health, and are capable of enjoying all the sweets and comforts of life. So the Scriptures clearly demonstrate, that the will of God makes a far greater difference between individuals in the coming world. Some are chosen to everlasting life, while others perish in their iniquities. It is in consequence of the efficient will of God, that the righteous are made to differ from the wicked; *b* "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" *c* "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate

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to

a 1 Sam. ii. 7. *b* 1 Cor. iv. 7. *c* Rom. viii. 29. 30.

to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called; them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified?" So the Apostle speaks to believers, as receiving spiritual blessings according as God hath previously determined to bestow them. God *d* "who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame, before him in love;" *e* "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will;" and as "being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the council of his own will." It is observable, that the means and conditions of events are always included and connected with the decree which establishes the futurition of those events. Hence it is written, *f* "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." Whom God hath ordained to walk in good works, in time he creates them in Christ Jesus, for that purpose. *g* "For we are his workmanship, created

d Eph. i. 3. 4.*e* Eph. i. 5. 11.*f* 2 Thess. ii. 13.*g* Eph. ii. 10.

created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." And as saith *b* "is the gift of God," so, *i* "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." And as plainly as the Scripture speaks of some as being appointed unto life, it does as clearly speak of others as being appointed unto condemnation. Christ is spoken of as being *k* "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, where unto also they were appointed." And with respect to certain false teachers, Jude saith, *l* "who were before of old ordained to this condemnation."

THIS part of the Divine character, God's sovereignty in disposing the present and future situations of men, was one thing which rendered the preaching of our Saviour so exceedingly disagreeable to the pride of men. This he inculcated as a doctrine of great importance to give men a just idea of the character of the true God. He speaks of the elect, as being those whom his Father had given him; as those who would not be deceived; and as the sheep of his pasture who could not be plucked out of his

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Father's

b Eph. ii. 8.*i* Acts xiii. 18.*k* 1 Pet. ii. 8.*l* Jud. 4.

Father's hand. And moreover said, *m* "ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." The doctrine of the Divine sovereignty was so pleasing to Christ, that on his seeing a bright display of it, in the condemnation of Chorazin and Bethsaida, he broke his silence with a rapture of praise. *n* "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

BUT this doctrine, so pleasing to Christ, inculcated by all his faithful Ministers, appears not to create such agreeable sensations in the minds of men. And the more is said upon this subject, they are ready to imagine the darker it is. In such a case, this reflection is natural, viz. whether they do not *o* "call evil good, and good evil," and "put darkness for light, and light for darkness." For notwithstanding the opposition of some, to the doctrine of personal election to eternal life; if the question be asked, "whether the Bible does not plainly speak of some, as being from eternity elected of God, and consequently others rejected, or reprobated?" they grant, "Certainly it does."

m John x. 26.

n Matt. xi. 25, 26.

o Isai. v. 20;

3. ANOTHER Gospel doctrine, which a good and prudent Minister of Jesus Christ preaches, as pleasing God, and not men, is, the depraved state of mankind by nature. Mistakes also in the character of natural men, will lead to great confusion in a system of religion. The original formation of man was in the image of God. *p* "In the image of God created he him;" *q* "God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." In the trial of his obedience, he revolted from God, and became a rebel against the crown and dignity of Heaven. So that he is, by nature, devoid of every degree of that disinterested friendly affection to God and man, in which consists all real holiness and conformity to the moral image of God. That this is the natural state of man, is abundantly evident from inspiration. In the early ages of the world, *r* "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." *s* "They are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no not one." *t* "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil." They are *u* "a seed of evil doers, children

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that

p Gen. i. 27.
s Psal. xiv. 3.

q Eccle. vii. 29.
t Eccl. ix. 3.

r Gen. vi. 5.
u Mai i. 4, 5, 6;

that are corrupters—the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it." A total deprivation of that disinterested friendly affection to God and man, in which consists all real holiness and conformity to the moral image of God, together with its attendant enmity, is what is meant by total moral depravity. And instead of the natural man's possessing the least degree of this love to God, he is clearly represented in the Divine oracles as being his enemy, and having his heart filled with opposition against him. w "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." x "Now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause." This is what the prudent and faithful Ministers of Jesus Christ preach, as pleasing God, but not men, who, to evade the explicit and unequivocal declarations of Scripture, are ready to say, "that it is only an imaginary God, which they are represented as hating; or a false image which they form in their

w Rom. viii. 7.

x John xv. 24, 25.

their mind of God." But if this be the meaning of the Scripture, and the idea of the Apostle, his argument will read thus : *y* "For to be carnally minded is death ; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace : Because the carnal mind is enmity against a false imaginary God : for it is not subject to the false imaginary law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." But we are assured this cannot be the Apostle's meaning ; but that the carnal or unrenewed mind is enmity against the true God, and that it is not subject to the real law of God ; and this is the true reason why it is death to be carnally minded. So where Christ saith, "*But now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father,*" his meaning cannot be, that they had both seen and hated a false image both of him and his Father ; for they really saw Christ, but there was no false image of God in him. *a* "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Where God is said to be *b* "reconciling the world unto himself," it implies, that the world is opposed to the true God. Therefore it is with the carnal mind as God saith with respect to the shepherds, who were cut off. *c* "And my

y Rom. viii. 6, 7, 8.

y 2 Cor. v. 19.

a Col. ii. 9.

c Zech. xi. 8.

my soul loathed them, and their soul abhorred me." Men are never complained of, for being opposed to false Gods, or false imaginary Gods. This is a virtue, and they are required to oppose and hate them; but for loving and serving them, this is sin and rebellion against the true God. So that, we are assured from the word of truth, it is the true GOD, the LORD JEHOVAH, whom the carnal mind is represented as hating.

4. ANOTHER Gospel doctrine, which faithful Ministers of Jesus Christ preach as pleasing God, but not men, is that of regeneration, as being effected by the special agency of the Holy Spirit.

NOTWITHSTANDING, God has appointed his own Son Mediator between God and man, who by his obedience, death and suffering, has magnified the broken law and made it honourable, retrieved the injured character of God, and opened a door of mercy, and brought to the view of intelligence, a way in which he can consistently with his holy law, and all his Divine perfections, have mercy on those who will confess and forsake their sin; and in addition to this, he useth every argument with them suitable to make impressions on the minds

of

of rational beings, that they should thus do, and comply with the conditions of life : yet such is the fixed and deep-rooted obstinacy of man's heart against holiness, that none ever did or ever will comply with the conditions of salvation, without the creative influence of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, inspiration informs us, that mankind are dependant on God for regeneration, together with all holy exercises of heart. So great a change, as takes place in the conversion of a sinner to God, is effected by nothing short of Divine power. *d* " But we have this treasure," (the preaching the word) " in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." The new, or regenerate heart, is a blessing which God claims as his prerogative to give. *e* " And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." *f* " I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people." *g* " A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stoney heart out of your
D flesh,

d Cor. iv. 7. *e* Deut. xxx. 6. *f* Jer. xxxi. 33.
g Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh : and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

AGREEABLY to these promises of a new heart, the word of God ascribes the work, when it is accomplished, to a special Divine influence. *b* " Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The new heart, or regeneration, is represented in Divine Revelation, not only as being the effect of Divine power in a small degree, but the greatest exertion thereof; as when Christ was raised from the dead, and set at the right hand of God in the Heavens. *j* " The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." *k* " For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." *l* " Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

But

b John i. 13. *j* Eph. xviii. 19, 20. *k* Eph. ii. 10.
l 2 Cor. v. 17.

But none make themselves anew, without the power of God. It is moreover evident, that, if God withholds this special influence of his Spirit, men will perish. *m* " Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day."

n " I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." So that, *o* " the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."

p " Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." *q* " Therefore hath he mercy on whom

he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." And that mankind are as absolutely dependant on the influence of God for the following holy exercises of the regenerate heart, as for the first, it is evident from the word of God. *r* " For without me," saith Christ, " ye can do nothing." David acknowledges this his dependance. *s* " I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart."

m Deut. xxix. 4.

n Matt. xi. 25.

o Rom. xi. 7.

p John xii. 39, 40.

q Rom. ix. 18.

r John xv. 5.

s Psalm cxix. 32.

heart." *t* "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it, until the day of Jesus Christ." And Paul saith, *u* "I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." *w* "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God." *x* "For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Thus we find the doctrine of absolute dependance to be the plain language of God's word, which is pleasing to him, but it is too humiliating to the haughtiness of men for their pleasure.

AND notwithstanding this scriptural doctrine of man's absolute dependance on God, the prudent and faithful Ministers of Jesus Christ, in full consistency with inspiration, will urge to immediate repentance and faith.

THIS is a duty which God now requires of all men. *y* "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." Accordingly Paul *z* testified both to the Jews and also to the Greeks repentance towards God, and faith towards

t Phil. i. 6.

u 1 Cor xv. 10.

w 2 Cor. iii. 5.

x Phil. ii. 13.

y Acts xvii. 30.

z Acts xx. 21.

towards our Lord Jesus Christ." *a* "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." *b* "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." All the commands and invitations of the Gospel, to repent and accept of salvation, have respect to the present time.

THEY allow not one moment for sinners to remain impenitent and unbelieving. No time is granted them for a delay of the exercise of that disinterested friendly affection towards God and man, which the law without an abatement now requires. There is nothing short of perfect holiness required of men in every moment of their existence. *c* "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." *d* "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

5. FAITHFUL Ministers of Jesus Christ, will preach, that men, while destitute of love to God, do no part of the Divine requirements.

ALL the Divine requirements are contained in the law; but the whole law is fulfilled by love. *e* "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart—This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou

a 2 Cor. vi. 2.
d 1 Peter i. 16.

b Heb. iii. 7, 8. *e* Matt. v. 48.
c Matt. xxii. 37, 38, 39, 40.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the Prophets." In conformity to this, the Apostle writes, *f* "He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling the law. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." If then love be the fulfilling of all the law, without love *no part* of the law is fulfilled. And as all the Divine requirements are contained in the law, those who are devoid of love to God and man, do *no part* of the Divine requirements.—This the Prophet confirms in his prayer to God, when he spake with respect to the rebellious house of Israel. *g* "They have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do."

AND as figurative language is best adapted, forcibly to impress ideas upon the mind, our Saviour, to confute the sentiment, that unregenerate sinners do something morally good, said, *b* "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt." ; "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit: neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit—for of thorns men do not

f Rom. xiii. 8, 10. Gala. v. 14. *g* Jer. xxxii. 23.
b Matt. xii. 33. *i* Luke vi. 43, 44, 45.

not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good : and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil : for of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." And in conformity to which, he again saith, & "How can ye, being evil, speak good things?"

BUT notwithstanding these plain declarations of the word, it is more pleasing to the natural heart, to be told, that although men do not renounce their selfishness, and are devoid of true love to God ; yet they may do some part of the Divine requirements.

BUT the good Minister will comprise love to God in all his exhortations to the performance of the externals of religion, as being absolutely requisite to perform any part of that which God hath commanded.

THIS strikes at the foundation of the pride of men's hearts ; for, to comply, they must renounce their selfishness, and be reconciled to God ; which, to the mind opposed to God, is ungrateful.

BUT if the exhortation may be complied with consistently with such an heart as the natural
man

man has, indisposed to holy exercises, it is easy and agreeable.

THERE are other important doctrines which faithful Ministers of Jesus Christ will largely insist on, as pleasing God ; to which we cannot now particularly attend.

SUCH as the justification of a sinner, in the sight of God, by faith, without the deeds of the law. / " For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." They will also, agreeably to the Divine command, make a distinction between the regenerate and unregenerate. And with much painful labour to the head, and trying to the heart, ascertain the difference between the holy and profane, the precious and the vile. And they will *m* " affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works."

AND largely will they insist on the duties of self-denial, and unreserved submission to God ; together with universal obedience to all the Divine commands.

WE shall only add, that they will preach the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust ; that the wicked will be
punished

punished with *interminable* destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power; while the righteous shall be received to the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

WE come,

II. To offer some reasons, why it is the indispensable duty of Christ's Ministers, to hold forth these doctrines of the Gospel, notwithstanding they are displeasing to men.

HERE we may observe in general. If any of the cardinal, capital, or less important doctrines of the Gospel, be denied, neglected, or passed over in silence, the design of the Gospel is proportionably rendered abortive.

BUT particularly,

1. THE glory of God requires it.

THE last end of the Gospel is, without doubt, to display the infinite majesty of God, in all the resplendence of his glory. And therefore, to promote this, Christ's Ministers are under indispensable obligations to represent the true character of God as displayed in his word, notwithstanding all the opposition they may meet with from every quarter.

2. THE salvation of sinners requires it.

ANOTHER design of the Gospel, in subordination

nation to the glory of God, is, the salvation and happiness of mankind.

IT was essentially requisite for the salvation of men, that God should make a Revelation in the Gospel; that light should spring up to them who sat in darkness, and the region and shadow of death. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." But, "Christ hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

AND no less requisite is it for the salvation of men, that the unadulterated doctrines of the Gospel should be preached, than that they should be written in the word.

So far then as the character of God is discoverable by his word and his works, it becomes the duty of his Ministers to represent it, that the Gospel may have its desired effect; and to point out, without falsehood, flattery, or equivocation, the natural state of mankind; their opposition of heart to, and enmity against God; their infinite criminality, and just exposedness to the Divine wrath; their entire and absolute dependance on the free, sovereign grace of God, through Christ, for every favour both of a spiritual and temporal nature.

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THE design of the Gospel is answered by none, but these plain, pinching, humiliating doctrines. These are calculated to instruct the ignorant, convince the sinner, and edify the Saint. These alone have a tendency to make sinners feel as they do under deep conviction of sin; or in some measure as they will feel, when they shall stand, guilty and condemned, before the face of their Omniscient Judge. But that preaching which easily slides over every thing of this nature, has no tendency to instruct, convince, or edify. No characters of men are likely to be benefited by unfeeling, indiscriminating, fashionable harrangues. These serve to please the humours, rather than to disturb the consciences, of secure sinners. Yea, this deadly poison of indiscriminating harrangues, serves to stupify the hearts of sinners, feed the ignorant with wind, and starve the children of God. How easy are sinners, so long as their Prophets prophesy smooth things, and represent God to be altogether such an one as themselves!

IF sinners can be persuaded that they do not hate God, that they are not totally depraved, but that they have the love of God in them, which only needs cherishing, and they by degrees arrive to a state of Saintship; if they are told that there is no such doctrine as the Divine sovereignty, as extending to the future situations of

of men, and are made to disbelieve the doctrine of regeneration as being wrought by the special agency of the Holy Spirit, and that of particular personal election to eternal life; they are unconcerned. If they can be made to believe that they are not wholly dependant on God, but that they have a self-determining power in their wills, and may be saved without a super-natural change of heart; how pleased is the corrupt heart with these doctrines! And better pleased still, if the terrors of the Lord can be removed with a denial of their eternal punishment.

IF these doctrines be not the *p* "smooth things" which men call upon the Prophets for, and if the preaching them be not *q* "daubing with untempered mortar, and sewing pillows to all arm-holes," what may be so termed?

THESE are the doctrines which are pleasing to men, but displeasing to God, and subverting the Gospel of Christ.

3. As another incentive for the Ministers of Christ strictly to adhere to the doctrines of the Gospel, however mortifying to the corruptions of men, we would observe, God hath strictly enjoined it upon all his Ambassadors; and by their refusal or neglect, they endanger their own

p Isa. xxx. 21.

q Ezek. xiii. 10, 18.

own eternal peace and well-being. *r* "The Prophet," saith God, "which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, shall die." Accordingly, when the Lord sent his Prophet Ezekiel, he gave him this charge, *s* "O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." *t* "And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words; and thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear." A like solemn charge did the Prophet Jeremiah receive to be faithful, *u* "Thus saith the Lord, Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah which come to worship in the Lord's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word."

AND no less pathetic and repeated are the injunctions to faithfulness, laid upon the Ministers

r Deut. xviii. 20.

s Ezek. ii. 6, 7.

t Ezek. xxxiii. 7, 8.

u Jer. xvi. 2.

ters of Christ, in the New Testament.—

w "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned." *x* "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Preach the word."

y "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

So important it is, that the Ministers of Christ hold forth the doctrines of the Gospel, without addition or diminution, however disagreeable they may be to men, that we hear the Holy Spirit breathing forth the condemnation of erroneous teachers in language like this, *z* "If any man preach any other Gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed." And as though this were not sufficient to guard the truth, there seems to be a comment upon these words to close the canon of Scripture, *a* "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the

w 2 Tim. iii. 14.

x Gala. i. 9.

x 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

a Rev. xxii. 18, 19, 20.

y 2 Tim. i. 13.

the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly."

INFERENCE.

FROM the consideration, that a Minister of Jesus Christ is under indispensable obligations to deliver certain Gospel doctrines, humiliating to the pride of men—

WE learn,

THE great importance of his own heart's being humble, and in love with God, and those doctrines which he is bound to deliver to others. If the enmity of his own carnal mind be not slain, and he renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost, and reconciled to God; it is unreasonable to suppose *he* should stand forth boldly for God, and faithfully vindicate his character and cause in the face of a frowning world. How shall one hold forth the beauties of the Divine character, who never saw it beautiful, and long and pray for the reconciliation of his fellow-men to that God with whom he himself is at variance? Will one vindicate the law of God to man, as being holy, just and good, when at the same time his own heart is opposed to the Divine requirements? Will he whose own heart

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is totally selfish, put vice and irreligion to the blush, in its various forms, and faithfully exhort to and inculcate that disinterested friendly affection to God and man, required in the holy law? Will he faithfully deliver the messages of God, and warmly press the soul-humbling doctrines of the Gospel, and exemplify them in an holy life? Shall we expect one of this character to pass through evil report and good report, honour and dishonour, forego his own private interest and reputation, the friendship of his connections, and be counted the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things, and nobly surmount all the difficulties in the way of vindicating the cause of Christ?—This sacrifice is not reasonably to be expected from him. We look for this only from him who loves God supremely, and whose heart glows with a warm desire for the glory of God in the salvation of sinners. Important and essentially requisite it is for him, who takes upon himself the office of an Ambassador of Christ, that he be possessed of a good heart, in order that he may, with the Divine approbation, perform any part of his function.

ONE may, however, without a good heart, (this necessary qualification to please God) be respected and very popular among men. Their approbation he may gain, by studying their humours;

mours, and conforming his doctrine to their vitiated taste. Finding a rule in his own feelings for this purpose, he will with great politeness evade every term and idea which has the least appearance of fastening guilt on the creature, his dependance on God, or of showing him his exposedness to damnation; and call his real presumption, in keeping back the truth, by the pleasing name of prudence. To veil men with darkness, which they love, rather than light; to flatter them, that they may do many things pleasing in the sight of God, and acceptable to him, as a part of commanded duty, when they have not respect to all his commands, nor true love to the most worthy of Beings; this is highly pleasing to the corrupt heart, and requires not a good one for its performance.

BUT nothing short of a good heart, and supreme love to God, will enable one faithfully to discharge the various duties of the ministerial office. On this ground, Peter received a commission from his Lord and Master, to feed his sheep and feed his lambs. But though this be an absolutely essential qualification for a Minister of Christ, it is not the only one. He must be a man of knowledge, and have a general acquaintance with men, the feelings of the human heart, and the tastes of the different de-

nominations of men, to enable him to treat with them in the most inoffensive manner *consistent* with truth and duty. He should, agreeably to the exhortation of Paul to Timothy, " Give attendance to reading ;" by which he may form a general acquaintance not only with the present but past ages of the world, converse with them together, and understand their civil and ecclesiastical histories, together with their systematical, polemic and practical Divinity. As he knows the Poets, he will be better able to reason with the Athenians from their own language, and to convince them of the truth. A general knowledge of the Arts and Sciences, and the languages in which the Scriptures were originally written, is confessedly important for the honourable discharge of the ministerial office.

Our subject will naturally give rise to further useful deductions. But omitting those, I attend to the voice of custom in addressing you,

*My Reverend Fathers and Brethren
in the Ministry.**

IT is with deference that I comply. I hope I shall not arrogantly perform the part assigned me to-day, in stirring up your pure minds to a remembrance

* *This Address was omitted in the delivery, for want of time.*

remembrance of the solemn charge we received to be faithful, in the important hour of our consecration to the sacred office; for the application of the subject belongs to our own bosoms.

LET us then inquire, whether we have been more assiduous and careful to please God, than men, or unsuitable feelings in ourselves?

FROM what has been hinted in the preceding Discourse, it appears to have been incumbent on us to enforce our doctrines by an holy life. Have we thus done? And are we the Ministers of Christ at heart, men who have been with, learnt of, and patterned after Jesus? Do we possess supreme love to God, and an earnest longing for his glory in the salvation of souls? Do we prefer the prosperity of Christ's kingdom to our chief joy? Is our love expressed by weeping for souls in secret places, and in being more attentive to the glory of God in their salvation, than every other object? Have we that love and holy delight in the service of the Sanctuary, as to render it agreeable as our meat and drink? Do we travail in birth for souls 'till Christ be formed in them? Do we take heed to our doctrine, and speak in a manner pleasing to God? Can we adopt the language of our text, and say,
As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with
the.

the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts ? Have we found grace sufficient to surmount all obstacles in the way of our holding up to view the character of God, as represented in his word, " as working all things after the council of his own will," and of declaring plainly to sinners, without equivocation or flattery, their real character, as being by nature enemies to God ?

YOUR own experience, Reverend Fathers, hath better taught you, than I can express, the trial of conscientiously delivering important truths, to the disgust of those on whom the peaceable residence of a Minister greatly depends. How important that we feel the oath of God upon us, which we received in our consecration to the sacred office, to teach all things which Christ hath commanded, and to set before sinners whatever the consequence may be, either to believe and be saved, or refuse and be damned ! If men rise up against us, they cannot take from us our peace of conscience, nor the approbation of our Judge. If we be faithful, we are sure that we shall be a sweet favour to God in them who are saved and in them who perish. Solemn is the reflection ! Important are our labours ! May God make us faithful unto death, that we may study to please him rather than men, and receive our crowns of life.

IN the next place,

Dear Brother,

SUFFER me to suggest a few thoughts to you in this serious moment.

THE Church and people of God in this place have given you their invitation to take the charge and oversight of them in the Lord : and your heart has been inclined to accept the office—we hope willingly, and not by constraint—not for filthy lucre's sake, but of a ready mind. The solemn hour is arrived, in which you are to receive the office, by prayer and the laying on the hands of the Presbytery. You will therefore, while you contemplate the scene, and the nature and importance of the charge, dedicate yourself afresh and unreservedly to your Lord and Master, that you receive not the seal of an Ambassador in vain. No doubt your office, in contemplation, is weighty and important ; but more sensible of this may you be in the execution thereof, if you speak not as pleasing men, but God who trieth our hearts. Engage the Spirit and presence of the great Head of the Church, who has promised to be with and support all his faithful Ministers.

CHRIST is this day sending you to preach to this people in his own name, and in some important respects committing the interest of their
immortal

immortal souls to your care. For his sake then, dear Brother, be faithful. Speak as he hath commanded, and as pleaseth him, whatever the effect may be on those who hear.

LIFT up your eyes and behold ! The fields are white already to the harvest. Our Lord and Master is calling us to labour in his vineyard, while our venerable Fathers in the Ministry are dying around us. Those Pillars of the Church are falling—they cannot always continue by reason of death ; and we are raised up in their stead.—And here are you to be placed a Colleague Pastor, to labour as a Son with the Father. Here are you to be placed as a light in the world ; and, O my Brother, let not the light in you be darkness. The eyes of the world are upon you ; yea more, you are continually under the Omniscient view of God : He will mark all your steps, and observe all your conduct, labour, and conversation, against the solemn day of retribution. It is required of you, that you deliver the whole council of God, and that you keep back nothing which is profitable for souls. If any of this people perish through lack of vision, or are lost through your neglect, they shall die in their sins, but their blood will be required at your hand.

WELL

WELL may you, trembling, say, Who is sufficient for these things?—But you will remember, that, through Christ strengthening, you will do all things. Study to please God. You have a plain rule, the sacred Oracles, that rich magazine of Divine truth, to which you will repair for every message you bear to the people. Add nothing to it, detract nothing therefrom, and your garments will be clear from the blood of all men.

WITH the tenderest emotions of heart, and earnest prayer for your success, we commend you to the grace of God. May you so fulfil your ministry, that hereafter you may shine as the Sun in his strength, and as a Star of the first magnitude in the kingdom of our common Lord.

The Address next turns to the Church and Congregation in this place.

*Brethren in the Faith and Fellowship
of the Gospel,*

PURSUANT to your request, we are now here before God, to invest the man with the sacred office, whom you have chosen to be placed over you in the Lord.

WE sincerely congratulate you in that unanimity and peace which have marked all your proceedings,

proceedings, and in the agreeable prospect of the beneficent consequences which may follow.

OUR conduct in proceeding in the solemnities of the Ordination, bespeak our approbation of the man whom you have chosen, and that we really expect he will be a faithful Minister of Jesus Christ among you, rightly dividing the word of truth, giving to every one a portion in due season.

MAY Zion here be built up under his labours, and the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hand. You have heard it to be the duty of a Minister of Christ, (such we charitably hope he will prove) to preach certain Gospel doctrines as pleasing God, but not men. Should he prove such an one, and deliver the whole council of God, solemn and eternal will be the consequences. This will swiftly prepare every soul for the future world; either for the sublime enjoyments of the blessed, or the unutterable misery of the cursed.

AND as his duty towards you will be great and important, so will yours be towards him. Let your desires for your Minister ascend to the throne of grace. He will need your fervent prayers. Encourage his heart, and strengthen his hands. Assist him where you can. In the discipline

discipline of the Church you will do much, that the laws of Christ's kingdom be attended to and duly observed.

MINISTERS are taken from among men, and are men of like passions with yourselves, subject to infirmities. Nevertheless, you should esteem them highly for their work's sake. Their charge is great, they watch for souls as they who must give account; their work is arduous, and their situation peculiarly difficult. *Hold such in reputation.* As you love the prosperity of Zion, defame not your Minister; raise no groundless and evil surmises to his disadvantage. Carefully secrete every unfavourable suggestion respecting him, from the knowledge of the rising generation, if you would not prepossess their minds, and forever bar them from receiving any benefit from his private or public instructions.

THE great Head of the Church considers the treatment his faithful Ministers receive, as being done to himself. If you speak against them, you speak against him. If you despise them, you despise him. If you reject them, you reject him.—But if you hear them, you hear him. If you receive them, you receive him. Therefore, joyfully receive the man whom you have chosen, as a precious ascension-gift from the
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great Head of the Church, and treat him as such. May he be a long and a rich blessing to you—eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame—a remover of your doubts, and a helper of your joy, leading you by the hand in the way everlasting.—Brethren, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

It only remains, that I address, in a few words, this whole Assembly.

Men and Brethren,

SOLEMN, important, and eternal, are the consequences of your living under the light of the glorious Gospel. Hereby have you advantages of knowing the character of God, and your own, far beyond those with which, perhaps, not more than the twentieth part of your fellow-men are indulged. This is to raise you to the sublime enjoyment of the blessed, or sink you with amazing woe in the depths of despair. For by this you will receive or reject the Saviour of the world, a circumstance never, never to be forgotten.

AND as you have heard, in some respects, the duty of a Minister of Jesus Christ, it will naturally bring to view your own. As it becomes them to hold forth the character of God,

as being an infinitely benevolent, wise, almighty, pre-determined Agent, working all things after the council of his own will; it becomes you to submit to ~~tham~~ as such. As they should *him* represent you in your natural state as being opposed to God, so you ought to consider yourselves; otherwise condemn as futile the scheme to reconcile you to God. When they represent the necessity of the special super-natural agency of the Holy Spirit, as being absolutely requisite for your saving conversion, you ought to receive it, and reflect upon that astonishingly obstinate will, and fixedness in iniquity, to require this. And especially when you consider, that all the motives of eternal weight, which God hath placed before you, from the first moments of your serious reflections, have not been sufficient to induce you to the practice of an holy life; and when those motives were nothing short of endless felicity in the realms of glory, contrasted with endless torment in the regions of the damned. If this has not preponderated, nor you been self-determined in the choice of holiness, believe you never will be, but by the power of God.

WHEN the Ministers of Christ hold up the duty and necessity of immediate repentance and
faith,

faith, feel that your eternal all depends upon your compliance. One day's delay, that of one hour, or one moment, may forever fix you beyond the reach of mercy.

ATTEND, therefore, to the words of eternal truth, proclaiming in your ears, *He who believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned.* Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. To day if you will hear my voice, harden not your hearts, lest I swear in my wrath ye shall not enter into my rest.

A M E N.



